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Navajo President Shelly Assures Navajo Safety

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said he assures Navajo people and surrounding communities that the Navajo Nation is safe.

"We are doing everything we can to ensure that all our residents are safe right now," said President Shelly in response to shootings in the Gallup area last night.

"We are actively investigating the Fire Rock shooting and robbery," said John Billison, division of public safety director.

Shootings reported at Tohatchi, Newcomb and Mexican Water are all false, Billison said.

"The Navajo police will partner with necessary law enforcement agencies to assure that all people involved in these crimes are held responsible," Billison said.

President Shelly agreed with Billison.

"We are going to work together to assure the safety of our people. The Navajo Nation's thoughts and prayers are with the victims of these crimes, and we will do our part to make sure these criminals are held responsible for their actions," President Shelly said.

According to reports, about 7:30 p.m. last night, Gallup police responded to a call reporting gunshots near the Pinon Hills Apartments near Dairy Drive.

Two people, one victim age 14 and the other victim was in his 40s, were in critical condition after they were shot near the apartment complex.

Information about the victims is not being released at this time according to officials.

The individuals were taken to Gallup Indian Medical Center, where one victim was flown to University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque.

According to Navajo Police, the altercation that started at Pinon Hills Apartments continued at the Gallup Indian Medical Center and another person was shot about 8:30 p.m.

The assailants fled the scene in a car, but was stopped shortly afterward near the Gallup UNM campus, where the driver, unknown age, surrendered himself to the McKinley County Sherriff's Deputies.

While deputies were arresting the individual, the teenage passenger drove off and led deputies and Navajo police on a chase south of Gallup on Highway 602.

The teenage driver then turned on a dirt road near milepost 20, where Navajo police apprehended the teen after he wrecked his car and fled on foot.

Around 9 p.m., law enforcement agents responded to a separate call from a gas station near I-40.

A victim reported that a man with a BB gun attempted to rob a customer of the gas station.

While police responded to that call, about 9:15 a report about shots fired at Fire Rock Casino.

According to a Navajo Police report, a male, age unknown, attempted to rob a man and his wife.

The robber approached the man and asked for money. When the victim said he didn't have any money, the robber then shot him in the face with a BB gun. The victim then covered his wife to protect her, while the robber shot 10 bb's breaking the passenger window of the car.

Fire Rock Casino was locked down until shortly after midnight, while investigators cleared the area.

"We believe the BB gun shootings and the earlier shootings at Pinon Hills Apartment Complex and GIMC are unrelated. However, we believe the incident's involving the BB gun are related," Billison said.

People with information about the shootings are asked to call the Navajo police at (928) 871-6112 or (505) 786-2050.

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